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equal in efficiency to a meter, but there may be many reasons why meters cannot be installed. The examination of water fixtures by inspectors is now urged as a valuable aid in reducing water consumption during the period which must elapse before meters can generally be installed under the war time conditions existing in this country.

W. W. BRUSH.

#### WRITING FOR PUBLICATION

Every experienced superintendent is confident he can edit his favorite trade paper better than it is now edited, at least in some particulars. Yet the fact is that the publishers of trade papers, whose success depends upon their ability to produce publications which large numbers of specialists like enough to buy, use only a very small part of the information in the articles presented by these specialists before technical societies. Furthermore, there are only a very few technical societies which publish journals that even pay expenses, unless a wholly unreasonable proportion of the annual dues are assumed to be paid solely for the journals. The societies, such as the Society of Chemical Industry, which publish profitable journals, conduct this part of their activities precisely like the publishers of trade journals. Therefore it is reasonable to believe that the methods of editing a successful trade journal are worth explaining at this time to the members of the American Water Works Association, for our printers have been compelled to increase their charges for publishing our JOURNAL about one-third, and it is necessary to adopt more economic methods in preparing papers for presentation and publication, in order to keep well within the budget for printing expenses. Furthermore the War Industries Board has ordered the amount of paper used in the JOURNAL reduced about 20 per cent.

There are two entirely distinct classes of papers published by technical societies. The first class is essentially news; it describes work planned, or under construction, or done. The second class is scientific; it describes investigations, analyzes the reasons for success or failure of methods of design or construction, reviews the state of some particular art or practice, or discusses those principles of economics which underlie sound business administration.

News articles must be brief. Fifteen years ago, it was the practice, even in trade papers, to embalm the kernel of news in a husk of

everyday knowledge, so that we were forced to waste our time needlessly in acquiring new information. James H. McGraw saw the mistake of this custom, and was the first leader among American publishers of trade papers, to insist that the news should be printed without the platitudes. Every reader of a trade paper owes him thanks for saving their time by starting this reform. We can waste money and yet earn more, but we cannot get back the time we waste, and we are wasting our most precious asset in padding news articles, in addition to wasting the time of the readers of them who have to read the superfluous paragraphs.

There is another feature of this subject that every man holding a technical or administrative place should keep in mind. Much of the best news, particularly in the water-works field, can be written on two or three sheets of paper. This is easily done; it results in something others in the same field desire; why not do it now and let the members of our Association share this interesting information, instead of putting it off until there is an opportunity to wrap the news in the old-fashioned husks? Why not openly confess that while examining the journals of many technical societies we long for some sort of literary gas mask?

The second class of articles, that dealing with scientific subjects, is a large one and has so many aspects that only the most general suggestions regarding it can be made here. Obviously the best method of presenting the results of special research is different from the best method of reviewing the state of an art, yet there are certain principles that govern the editorial staffs of our best trade papers which should govern everybody who writes on a technical subject. These are:

1. Have a clear knowledge of the viewpoint of the class you wish to read your article. You are not trying to get information out of your head; you are trying to get it into their heads; hence use the best way into them.
2. Don't give an unnecessary fact or make an unnecessary explanation of minor details. Assume that the reader possesses as much knowledge as you have, except of the new thing, and tell him about that only.
3. Tell the story in the clearest way by words, drawings or pictures, but tell it only once. Don't give both tables and curves; one is enough for practically every reader and let the hundredth man write to you for the omitted details that all the others do not

wish. Think of the time and printing charges this saves. Don't describe in words what is perfectly clear in illustrations; don't repeat in words what is given in detail in tables.

4. Don't give unnecessary tables; assume that the reader will grant that you know how to add and subtract, and is interested only in totals, as a rule. Prepare your tables so that they will occupy the smallest amount of printed space and still be clear. Look at tables in the publication for which you are writing, see how many figures can be put on a line in the column or the page, and arrange your tables accordingly. Otherwise somebody must rearrange them for you, and probably make mistakes in doing so.

5. Send drawings that can be photoengraved and save the Association the expense of making drawings for the purpose. Never use colors on drawings for photoengraving. Remember that if a drawing must be reduced to one-third, say, of its size to be printed on the page, each line and letter on the drawing must be three times the size it is to be on the engraving. Use only two sizes of lettering on such a drawing, one for the text and one for the very few titles sometimes necessary. Don't give a line or a word not absolutely necessary. If the drawing has a single detail that is much finer than all the rest, make an outline of this detail on the main drawing and then, on a larger scale, give the detail; this will enable the general drawing to be photo-reduced to the size it should have in the engraving and will also give the detail in legible form, a great help to the reader and a saving of expense to the Association.

6. Remember the many times you have wondered why the JOURNAL was padded with so much useless stuff; don't pad. Remember how many times you wished for news about some improvements or some piece of work; send the JOURNAL your own news or tell the Publication Committee what you wish. Remember that nine-tenths of good technical practice is the result of sound judgment and only one-tenth depends upon demonstrable facts; help others with the practical knowledge upon which good judgment rests, just as others are helping you.

JOHN M. GOODELL.

#### BURNING SMALL SIZES OF ANTHRACITE

Many years ago the late Eckley B. Coxe, the noted mining engineer and coal operator, saw the approach of much higher costs of pro-